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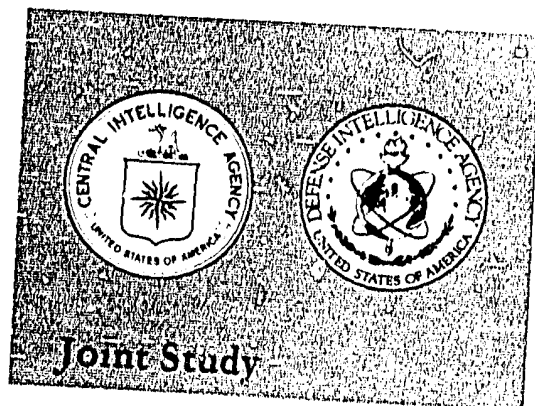
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# Weekly Survey of Communist Military Developments in Indochina

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3 April 1974

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3 April 1974

**Fifty-Seventh Report**

**WEEKLY SURVEY  
OF COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN INDOCHINA\***

(This report covers the period  
from 27 March through 2 April 1974)

The Key Points



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truck traffic in Laos and South Vietnam was heavy during  
the week.



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\* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Exempt

to the tri-border area, which showed heavy traffic. More than 250 southbound trucks were seen [redacted] - the highest number observed moving since February. [redacted]

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[redacted] the main supply corridor in Laos has indicated that, although the roadbed reflected the movement of large vehicle convoys through the Panhandle, on most days fewer than 50 trucks were actually observed moving. [redacted]

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### *South Vietnam*

8. [redacted] Route 9 remained in good condition and was sustaining heavy traffic. The largest convoy was observed on 31 March, when 43 trucks were seen heading east near Khe Sanh. In addition, numerous 10-20 truck convoys were observed heading both east and west along the route during the week, in what was apparently a steady stream of traffic. Along the Communists' western supply corridor, some light to moderate truck traffic was noted from the A Shau Valley south to Kontum Province, most of which was apparently related to construction activity along the corridor [redacted]

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## **II. Significant Communist Combat Activity**

9. Communist cease-fire violations continued to rise last week, with a daily average of 112 incidents in comparison with the previous week's 93. This rate surpasses the 1973 average of 100 violations per day. Casualties on both sides also remained above the 1973 levels of 28 for the ARVN and 99 for the Communists, with Communist dead stable at 111, while South Vietnamese losses increased from 32 to 44 per day. Most major clashes occurred in MR 3 and were associated with the concerted Communist ground and artillery attacks on the ARVN ranger base of Duc Hue in Hau Nghia Province. MR 4 continues to register the majority of total violations, which consisted primarily of limited attacks-by-fire, ground probes, and harassing actions.

III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

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*Recent Communist Construction Activities in Laos and South Vietnam*

14. [redacted] continued improvement of Communist infiltration corridors in South Vietnam and southern Laos. With most of the basic construction of the two new supply routes now complete, emphasis during March focused on route refinements and the building of new permanent logistic facilities. The pace of construction activity

accelerated noticeably along Communist Route 14, leading south along the western border of South Vietnam. Now that the route is dried out from the monsoon rains, road crews and bulldozers are upgrading the road alignment, especially the segment recently opened between the Dak Pek Bypass and Dak To in Kontum Province.

15. [ ] most of the road junctions along Route 14 are being developed into large logistic centers. New excavation and bulldozer clearing of roadside areas at Ta Bat (Route 547 junction), A Sap (Gorman's Road junction), A So (Route 614 junction), Ben Giang (South Vietnamese Route 14 junction), and at Kham Duc (Routes 534 and 1404 junction) indicate that each junction will be a major support depot for Communist base areas west of Route 14.

16. Extension and improvement of the Communist petroleum pipeline systems paralleling each of the new supply corridors also were noted. Along the relatively more secure Laotian corridor, the North Vietnamese are shifting to the use of more permanent vertical storage tanks in place of smaller, often-buried horizontal containers. [ ] vertical tanks are located in the vicinity of the tri-border area (see the transportation map), suggesting that the tri-border area will be developed into a large permanent logistic base supporting North Vietnamese interests in southern Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. Along Route 14, work crews continue to lay new pipeline southward through the A Shau Valley and to build new petroleum storage tanks. Additions to existing storage areas and the new roadside storage facilities are still being buried and revetted, reflecting Communist concern about possible air attack. The newest facility is located 10 miles south of the A Shau airstrip and contains some 11 large horizontal storage tanks and excavations for six others.

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#### *Cambodian Air Force Attack on Communist Storage Area*

17. On 24 March the Cambodian Air Force launched an apparently highly successful 15-plane strike against a large Communist storage area about 95 miles northeast of Phnom Penh. Aerial observers reported smoke rising to 6,000 feet, flames to 1,500 feet, and sustained secondary explosions for 30 minutes after the strike, suggesting that major damage was inflicted on the 2,000 barrels of oil and several hundred crates of unidentified materiel located in the target area.

18. The potential impact of this raid on Communist operations cannot be assessed because of uncertainties surrounding the quantity of supplies destroyed and their intended end-user - the Khmer or Vietnamese Communists. Nonetheless, the operation holds some portent for the Cambodian Air Force. Because the ambitious raid deep in Communist-controlled territory was the first of its kind, and tight security



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was maintained, complete surprise and a total absence of opposing ground fire were achieved. Moreover, the raid demonstrated continuing improvement in the planning and execution of air operations and a nascent ability to exploit intelligence information.

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